

"The Seafarer," translated by Burton Raffel

"The Wanderer," translated by Charles Kennedy

"The Wife's Lament," translated by Ann Stanford

Reading Strategy: Connect to Historical Context

Recognizing the **historical context** and the characteristics of the period in which a work was written helps you notice relevant details and ideas. For example, if you know that Anglo-Saxon culture was male-dominated, you may be able to understand the poet's line: "My lord commanded me to move my dwelling here."

DIRECTIONS: Use your understanding of Anglo-Saxon historical context to help you understand the following excerpts. In the right column, record how your comprehension is affected by what you know.

Excerpt	How Historical Context Aids Understanding
1. "The Seafarer": "This tale is true, and mine. It tells/How the sea took me, swept me back/ And forth in sorrow and fear and pain,/Showed me suffering in a thousand ships, . . ."	1.
2. "The Wanderer": "'So have I also, often in wretchedness/Fettered my feelings, far from my kin,/Homeless and hapless, since days of old,/When the dark earth covered my dear lord's face,/And I sailed away with sorrowful heart,/Over wintry seas, seeking a gold-lord . . .'"	2.
3. "The Wife's Lament": "I must far and near/ bear the anger of my beloved./The man sent me out to live in the woods/under an oak tree in this den in the earth./Ancient this earth hall./I am all longing."	3.